

John Pierce.

ADVERTISEMENT.

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**Dr. Dwight's  
CHARITY SERMON.**

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE are in the City of New-Haven three Female Charitable Societies, voluntarily formed for the purpose of relieving the sufferings of Women, and Children, in the several Congregations. At the request of two of these Societies the following Discourse was delivered, and is now printed.



THE CHARITABLE BLESSED.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

FIRST CHURCH

IN NEW-HAVEN,

AUGUST 8. 1810.

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BY TIMOTHY DWIGHT, D. D.

*President of Yale College.*

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THE CHARITABLE BLESSED.

# SERMON.

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BY TIMOTHY DWIGHT, D.D.

Pastor of the Church.

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NEW-YORK

1810



## A SERMON.

PSALM xli. 1. 2. 3.

*"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.*

*The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive: and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.*

*The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."*

IN this passage of Scripture, the person, *who considers the poor*, is pronounced *blessed*. To this declaration several promises are subjoined, specifying the particular blessings, which constitute the happy state, thus generally announced. These are, deliverance in seasons of trouble; preservation; the prolongation of life; safety from enemies; peace and comfort on a sick bed; restoration to health; and the blessing of God upon his various concerns, while he continues in the world. It will not be doubted, that he, to whom all these divine favours are promised, together with those, which inseparably follow them as consequences, must possess an excellent character, and be eminently an object of the Divine approbation.

*Considering the poor* is justly explained to mean making them in such a sense the subjects of our careful thought, and thorough investigation, as to learn, to feel, and to relieve, their distresses. He, who in the *literal* sense considers the poor, can scarcely fail of doing all, that I have expressed. Almost every

man, who is determined not to administer this relief, avoids, of design, making the poor subjects of his consideration at all.

The word, here rendered *the poor*, is in the margin translated *the sick*, or *weak* ; and may be regarded as a comprehensive term, denoting, universally, such as, in want and suffering, stand in need of our assistance.

To consider the poor, then, is to learn, feel, and relieve, the necessities of our fellow men, of whatever nature they may be, and from whatever source they may spring ; whether they are wants of the body, or wants of the mind ; whether derived from ignorance, vice, poverty, disease, or sorrow.

From these observations it will be seen, that, in the text, *Charitable persons, universally, are declared to be blessed.*

In discussing this subject, I shall enquire into the *Nature of Charity, thus understood ;*

*The Duty of administering it ;*

*The Grounds, on which it is refused ; or neglected ;*  
and

*The Considerations, by which it is enforced.*

*The Nature of Charity, thus understood*, may be sufficiently explained, for the present purpose, in the following manner.

1. *It consists in relieving the Necessities of others.*

By this I intend supplying them with necessary food, clothing, lodging, fuel, and houses. On this subject, there will, probably, be no dispute, except concerning the extent of the beneficence. That we are bound not to see our fellow creatures starve, go



naked, freeze, live in the open air, and lodge on the ground, while we possess an abundance of conveniences and luxuries, avarice itself will not, in this country, dare to deny.

2. *It consists in relieving, and, so far as may be, removing, the evils of Disease.*

The poor only, need, in ordinary circumstances, the administration of the charity, mentioned under the preceding head. All may stand in need of that, which is here specified. Sickness and pain arrest men in every condition of life. But the poor much more extensively need *this* exercise of charity, also, than other men. Their needy circumstances are very fruitful sources of these evils. Their food is often less, than nature demands; and worse in kind, than is consistent with either comfort or health. Their clothes ill defend them from the inclemencies of the weather: Their lodging is cold, as well as hard: Their houses are open to the rain, frost, and snow: and their bleak and cheerless hearths are wretchedly warmed by a scanty pittance of fuel. From all these sources pain and sickness spring up, like a rank vegetation in a fat soil.

About the duty of administering charity in *this* manner, also, there will probably be little debate, unless concerning the degree, to which it shall extend.

3. *It consists in relieving Sorrow.*

There are multitudes of persons in every class, who suffer, extensively, this species of distress; and all suffer it in greater or less degrees. To sympathize with our fellow creatures, when thus suffering, to soothe their anguish, to give them consolation, to teach them patience and submission, to inspire them with hope, and to shew them how to make the best

use of their afflictions, is a duty, copiously enjoined in the scriptures ; a genuine effect of religion ; and a high ornament of the Christian character.

4. *It consists in extricating our fellow creatures out of their difficulties.*

These are endlessly numerous, and various ; and are often not less distressing in their whole extent, than pain, sickness, and poverty. I shall, however, select only two or three examples of this kind of suffering, on the present occasion ; as the time will admit of no more.

One of the greatest difficulties suffered, by the poor, is either their want of capacity to employ themselves, or their want of the materials for such employment. So far as I have observed human life, most of the poor, who are not addicted to vice, would rather support themselves by their own labour, than be supported by others. But they are often unable to contrive business for themselves ; and, perhaps, oftener still to provide the means of doing it. Both these difficulties may usually be removed by persons of more ingenuity, and property, with a moderate degree of trouble, little risque, and little expense of time or money. I know of no pecuniary charity, more commendable than this.

Another example is found in the difficulties, which young men, in small circumstances, experience in attempting to obtain business for life. Few situations are more productive of despondency, than this. Most youths are easily discouraged by difficulties. *Here* the difficulty respects their whole success in the world. Their want of experience prevents them from being able to devise the proper means of relief ; their want of property, from being able to furnish those means ; their want of resolution, and their want of friends, from being able to overcome, or even struggle with,



their difficulties. He, who takes a young man by the hand, and aids him by money, contrivance, advice, or even countenance, to acquire useful business, will often illumine the whole course of his future life with hope, usefulness, reputation, and enjoyment. He, who can, and will not, becomes one voluntary cause of his ruin.

I will mention but one more example. There are many persons, who, with considerable possessions, are yet embarrassed by debt. Often, they may be relieved, without any ultimate loss of property to those, who will become their benefactors. Sometimes they may be extricated from their difficulties by mere advice. Men of superiour skill in business have it in their power to render important acts of beneficence to others, merely by telling them how to manage their embarrassed affairs with advantage. At other times, they will need pecuniary assistance; and this can often be furnished to them, without loss or hazard. All, that is necessary, will be a little trouble, united with a little generosity; while the consequences will be the removal of distresses, otherwise insurmountable, and the restoration of comfort to a family through life; and, perhaps, the communication of it to several succeeding generations.

5. *Charity, in this sense, consists, also, in preventing, or removing, Ignorance.*

The ignorance, to which I refer, is that of Business, and that of Religion. The former prevents the subjects of it from acquiring the means of comfort in the present world: the latter, from acquiring eternal life. No person will deny both these kinds of ignorance to be distressing calamities. Yet I fear, that much of *what ought to be done* to prevent, or remove, these evils, even in this country, *is left undone*. Neither children, nor servants, are taught, in many instances, as

extensively as they ought to be, either industry or œconomy ; their moral state, and necessities ; their duty ; and the way of salvation. If children be not instructed in these things, in some good measure, at home ; they will be ill prepared to understand what they are taught from the desk.

6. *The Charity in question consists also in removing, or preventing Vice.*

Vice is the greatest calamity, and the prevention, or removal, of it the greatest benefit, which can be experienced by man. “*Breth en, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him ; let him know, that he, who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins.*” Every step in this employment partakes of its general nature ; and is eminently amiable, and excellent. A volume might be written on this subject without repetition, and with great advantage. The time, however, forbids me to expatiate upon it : particularly, as I shall resume it in a subsequent part of the discourse.

Concerning *the Duty of administering Charity* it will be sufficient to observe, that it is expressly commanded by God ; that it is enjoined in the Gospel, in many forms ; that it is impressed upon us with peculiar solemnity and force ; and that it is urged more extensively, than any other duty, which is owed to our fellow men. He, who wants additional considerations, to convince him, that he is under indispensable obligations to perform works of charity, may rest satisfied, that he is ignorant of his duty, not because he does not understand, but because he does not love, it.

Among *the Grounds, on which this Charity is refused, or neglected*, I shall mention the following.

1. *Ignorance of the wants of others.*



Since I have lived in this town, I have observed, that there has rarely been any difficulty in procuring a considerable sum for the relief of sufferers, where the object of the contribution was directly specified ; where the sufferers were pointed out, and their wants and distresses made known ; and where the sum necessary was definitely exhibited. The particular degree of this liberality was evidently owing to the knowledge furnished of the reasons why, and the extent to which, it was necessary. These facts, and others of the same nature, have induced me to examine this subject with some attention : and the result of my enquiries has been a full conviction, that charity often fails of being exercised, because the necessities of its proper objects are unknown. My Brethren, we are bound to *learn* the sufferings of others, as well as to *relieve* them. Scarcely any kind of knowledge, which is so much within our reach, is so imperfectly possessed by the great body of those, from whom the administration of charity is principally required by their Maker. That, which we do not know, we cannot feel. Distress, which we only suppose to exist, will rarely rouse us to any exertion. Until we become more extensively acquainted with the distresses of others, therefore, they will never be effectually relieved. The real reasons, why we do not make ourselves acquainted with them, are usually pride, false delicacy, unwillingness to undergo the trouble of enquiring, and the fear, that, if we gain this knowledge, we shall feel obliged to incur the expense of administering the necessary relief.

*2. Want of System is another cause of this evil.*

A great part of the charities, administered in this town, are matters of mere accident. We have, I believe, a Charitable Society, existing among one class of its inhabitants ; and the fragments of another such So-

ciety. Beside these, the three Female Societies, and the contributions in the several Congregations, intended to provide fuel, to some extent, for the poor, there is nothing of this nature here, which at all wears the appearance of design. The two Societies, first mentioned, were intended for specific objects only. The Female Societies, and the contributions, take a wider range ; and, so far as they extend, certainly answer the most valuable purposes. There is, however, a great circle of wants, and distresses, on which neither of these can have any influence : wants, and distresses, which, so far as they are relieved, are relieved incidentally, and irregularly. But that, which is done incidentally and irregularly, is always imperfectly done. The want of arrangement will prevent it from much of that extensive and happy efficacy, which it might possess otherwise ; and will prevent the charity from reaching the most proper objects, and from affecting those, whom it actually reaches, in the most useful manner. What is incidentally and irregularly done will naturally be considered, also, as of little importance ; as what may be omitted without much impropriety, or disadvantage ; and will therefore be done chiefly, or only, in small degrees, and solitary instances. System gives to every concern of man importance, as well as method ; secures the frequent attention of the mind, and the regular efforts of the hands ; and therefore gives to human business the highest degree of energy and success. A duty of such high distinction, as the administration of charity, ought not to be unpossessed of these advantages.

*3. Another cause of these evils is Insensibility to the sufferings of others.*

All men wish to be thought men of feeling and humanity. Multitudes *boast* of this as their character : and few would probably regard the charge of being



insensible to the distresses of others as any thing less, than slander and calumny. There are, I believe, very few of the human race, who are absolutely destitute of such feelings. The want of sensibility to distress, *here intended*, is that state of mind, which, whatever else it may be, or do, produces no efficacious attempt towards providing the necessary relief. I intend the spirit, the disposition, which now, as it did two thousand years ago, says to naked, hungry sufferers, "*Depart in peace ; be ye warmed, and be ye filled ;*" but gives them not those things, which are needful to the body. My Brethren, *what doth* such a disposition, whether we call it sensibility, or *faith*, profit either its possessor, or his fellow creatures ? It has, long since, been high time for all persons, who do not sufficiently feel the calamities of their fellow-men to lend them, when it is in their power, serious relief, frankly to acknowledge, that they do not, in the proper sense, feel them at all.

On this spirit it is, I fear, in vain to think of making impressions. The evil lies so deep either in the nature, or the habits, of the man, as to be beyond the reach of any thing, which I am able to say.

4. *Another cause of these evils is Avarice.*

Mankind are avaricious in two ways : *to become rich ; and to provide the means of shew and pleasure.* In whatever way indulged, *Avarice is the daughter of the horse-leech, crying "give, give :"* the fire, which saith not it is enough. I use the word, *here*, in the former sense ; the mere love of hoarding up money.

There is scarcely any folly in the human character, scarcely any sin of man, more severely, or more awfully, reprov'd in the Scriptures, than this *lust of the eyes.* "*They that will be rich,*" says St. Paul, "*fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil ; which some covet-*

ing after have been seduced from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things."

"How hardly," says our Saviour, "shall they that are rich, enter into the kingdom of Heaven. It is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Surely these terrible declarations ought to alarm every man, who is eagerly engaged in the pursuit of wealth. Every such man, if he believes the voice of God, must see, that his soul is in peculiar danger. Suppose, my Brethren, God with an audible voice should call from Heaven to one of you, in the prosperous and ardent career of amassing riches; and, addressing him by name, should say, "Miserable man, it is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle than for thee to enter into the kingdom of God." Would not this man shudder with terror? Would he not shrink with amazement? Would not his heart like that of *Nabal*, when informed of the dreadful purpose of *David*, die within him, and become as a stone? My Brethren, God is now actually addressing this very language to every man in this house, who is eagerly coveting, and labouring to become rich, and peculiarly to every one, who has already become rich. Let me solemnly charge you, as I am commanded to do by the voice of God, that you be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that you be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.

##### 5. Another cause of these evils is Ambition.

By *Ambition*, in this case, I intend not the love of place, or power; but the love of shew, luxury, and pleasure; the spirit, which unites, and combines, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. In this case, wealth is not coveted, and sought, for its own sake; but for the sake of the enjoyments, which it yields.



This is the spirit of *the rich man*, whose ground brought forth plentifully, so remarkably displayed in that doting soliloquy ; “ *I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years : take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* ” This was the spirit also of *the rich man*, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. The miser cannot give to the poor and distressed, because he dreads to lessen his heap : the *luxurious man*, because he cannot bear to curtail the costliness of his dress, the sumptuousness of his table, or the splendour of his equipage. What will become of these things, when God shall say to him, “ *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.* ”

6. *The last cause of these evils, which I shall mention, is the wish to lay up property for our children.*

The wish to provide comfortably for our children is not only rational, and innocent, but an indispensable duty. “ *If any man provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house ; he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* ” God has entrusted our children to our care, and has very reasonably, as well as very kindly, required, that we should sustain them ; educate them ; form them to habits of virtue ; prepare them for useful business ; and enable them, so far as shall be in our power, to enter, with prospects of success, upon some beneficial and reputable employment for life. But he has not required of us any anxiety, or any labours, to leave them rich. On the contrary, he has taught us, both in his word, and in his providence, that such anxiety, and such labours, are miserable folly. “ *Yea,* ” saith the wisest of all men, speaking by the spirit of inspiration, “ *I hated all my labour, which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man, that shall be after me ; and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man, or a fool ? Yet*

*shall he have rule over all my labour, wherein I have laboured. This also is vanity."*

The humbling truth, which concludes these observations of *Solomon*, is abundantly exhibited in the course of divine providence. Almost all the wealth, which exists in this town, has been earned by those, who possess it. During forty four years, the term in which I have been acquainted with it, almost all the persons, who have inherited considerable property, and have left the world, have died poor : very many of them bankrupts ; some of them beggars ; and scarcely any of them men of wealth. What man would toil through life, to earn property, with the knowledge that this would be the issue of his labours ? What man, of common sense, must not perceive the decisive probability, furnished by this example, that his labours to hoard up property for his children will issue in this manner ? My Brethren, you profess to love your children. Do you wish it to be more difficult, are you willing to toil through life to make it more difficult, *for them to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle ?* Are you willing to place them in temptation, and a snare, and to cherish in them *the foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition ?* Will you make these objects reasons for refusing, or neglecting, to perform a duty, so loudly demanded by humanity, so pungently urged by conscience, so solemnly enjoined by God ?

The charity, which now addresses itself to the generosity, the compassion, the consciences, the piety, of this assembly, is in some respects of a peculiar nature ; and has a fair claim to particular consideration.

The Ladies of the several Congregations in this town have, in a manner highly honourable to their character, formed themselves into three Benevolent Societies ; the object of which is to carry relief to every



cottage of distress, to every fire-side of poverty. The kinds of relief, which they aim to convey, are two : *the relief of want and suffering, and the removal or prevention of vice and ignorance.* Both these purposes they have, so far as their supplies admit, taken very happy and commendable means to accomplish. For the relief of suffering, they have especially aimed to provide clothes and bedding. These they not only purchase, and give ; but by their own industry, and that of their families, convert the materials into those forms, in which they become fitted for immediate use and comfort. The contributions of this kind are especially intended for the relief of *women and children* ; ordinarily both the most necessitous, and the most deserving, objects of charity. Women and children are usually reduced to want, and distress, by the idleness, gaming, and drinking, of him, who is at once the husband and the father ; and who, by neglecting *to provide for those of his own house*, has violated his marriage vows ; has incurred guilt, little short of a continued perjury ; *has denied the faith of Christians* ; and has proved himself *worse than an Infidel*. This, I acknowledge, is not always the source of the sufferings in question. Even when this is the fact, women and children are plainly less able to provide for their own necessities, or to relieve their own sufferings, than men ; and, therefore, commend themselves to the benevolence of every good man by the great consideration, that *they peculiarly need assistance.*

What is given by the benevolence of these Societies is given with peculiar advantages. The wants and sufferings of families are incomparably better understood, and more perfectly comprehended, by women, than by men ; as are, also, the means of relief, and the ways, in which these means can be most usefully administered. They gain, far more easily, that access to

the circumstances of families, which enables them to discern the reality, the nature, and the extent, of their sufferings ; are much more willing to take upon themselves the trouble of enquiring ; and are much more patient, persevering, and thorough, in their investigations. Thus they learn, more effectually than men, *who* are proper objects of beneficence ; what they need ; and how, when, and in what measure, it should be administered. At the same time, charity, distributed in this manner, *is safely distributed*. It is not squandered at the gaming-table : it is not emptied into the cup of drunkenness. It warms the limbs : it cherishes the heart : it comforts the sick-bed : it soothes pain : it refreshes languor : it renews the efforts of discouraged industry : and it gladdens the soul with hope, gratitude, and joy. It furnishes, also, that decent attire, which cannot be otherwise provided ; and enables those, who by decency only would be otherwise shut out, *to go to the house of God*, to seek his face, and to gain everlasting life.

It ought to be added, that the industry and efforts of those, who are intended to be relieved, are employed with no small advantage for the purpose of extending the usefulness, and increasing the value, of the benefactions. Their hands, as well as those of their benefactresses, are employed in making, and repairing, the materials and garments, which are given : and, in this way, the amount of the charity is, in some instances, doubled to the receiver. The objects of these charities, particularly the children, have also been employed in several other modes of useful industry ; the results of which were intended for sale ; and the produce to be converted into supplies of such useful things, as they most needed. This is incomparably the best mode of conducting those benefactions, which are designed to furnish necessities and comforts to the



poor ; the cheapest ; the most productive ; and altogether the most pleasing to the receivers : as it gives them the peculiar satisfaction of contributing, reputationally, to their own support. At the same time, it redeems them from the danger, or the habit, of Idleness, by furnishing them with employment, which they have neither knowledge, nor ability, to furnish for themselves. In this manner they are taken out of the list of the objects of charity ; and placed on the list of those, by whom such objects are hereafter to be relieved. Nor is this all. Idleness is not only a gross vice in itself, but the highway to all other vices. By making these persons industrious in early life, we prevent them from being nuisances, and convert them into useful members, of society. In addition to this, we seize incomparably the best, and perhaps the only, opportunity, which will ever be given, for preparing them to become Christians.

It is highly desirable, that this part of the design should meet with certain, regular, and liberal encouragement : that one, or more merchants should agree to receive, on terms at once equitable and safe, these avails of suffering industry ; and that, this fact being publicly known, others should make a point, so far at least as their own convenience will allow, of giving them a preference, whenever they have occasion to purchase articles of the same kind. Should some little inconvenience be suffered by either ; it is to be hoped, that persons may be found, willing still to make this *offering, of a sweet-smelling savour unto God.*

*For the prevention, or removal, of ignorance and vice,* beside what has been already mentioned, these Societies, with a spirit deserving of the highest commendation, have instituted several schools for the instruction of poor female children : children, whose parents ei-

ther would not, or could not, give them this indispensable education. It is not enough to say, that the common schools are open for their reception ; or that the State, with unrivalled liberality, has provided extensive means for this very purpose. These facts being admitted, the assertion is still true. Where all other obstacles were removed, the want of decent clothes still remained an insuperable one ; and would have effectually prevented these unfortunate beings from acquiring such a degree of instruction, as is indispensable to their future usefulness and comfort, and highly important towards the attainment of eternal life. Without this education, my Brethren, *these children would never be able to read the word of God.*

Among these schools, I confess, that I feel a peculiar interest in that, which has been established for *the benefit of the female children of the blacks.* This unfortunate race of people are in a situation, which peculiarly demands the efforts of charity, and demands them from *us.* Our parents and ancestors have brought *their* parents, or ancestors, in the course of a most iniquitous traffic, from their native country ; and made them slaves. I have no doubt, that those, who were concerned in this infamous commerce, imagined themselves justified ; and am not disposed to load their memory either with imprecations or censures. Happily for *us*, the question has been made a subject of thought and investigation. This decided it at once : and we are now astonished, that it could ever have given rise to a single doubt. Under the influence of overwhelming conviction, we have made the descendants of these abused people free. Here we have stopped ; and complimented, and congratulated, ourselves for having done our duty. But notwithstanding this self-complacency, it is questionable, my Brethren, whether we have rendered to the present race of this



people any real service. You will ask, "Have we not made them free? and is not liberty, in the acknowledgement of all men, a pre-eminent blessing?" Liberty, my Brethren, is a blessing in the hands of those, who know how to use it, and are disposed to use it to good purposes. It may easily be abused by ignorance; it will certainly be abused by vice; and, whenever it is abused, it becomes a curse, instead of a blessing.

But these people, I need not inform you, are, generally, neither able, nor inclined, to make their freedom a blessing to themselves. When they first become free, they are turned out into the world, in circumstances, fitted to make them only nuisances to society. They have no property; nor any skill to acquire it. Nor have they, in the proper sense, generally any industry. They have been indeed used to labour; but it was under the controul, and for the benefit, of others. The *hatred of labour*, in this situation becomes the habit; not the labour itself. They have no economy; and waste, of course, much of what they earn. They have little knowledge either of morals or religion. They are left, therefore, as miserable victims to sloth, prodigality, poverty, ignorance and vice. We complain of their vice. Who in such circumstances would not be vicious? They have the usual appetites and passions of man; and love to eat and drink, to wear finery, and to riot in amusements, just as we do; but are unfurnished with those restraints on these propensities, with which a merciful God has furnished us.

As these people are thus in a great measure unable to provide for themselves, and to regulate their own conduct; they must be equally unfit to educate their children, and to form them to habits of industry, economy, morals, or religion. Knowledge and hab-

its, which they themselves have not, they cannot communicate. Their children must grow up in more dismal ignorance, and with even worse habits, than those of their parents. The parents have often grown up in respectable families ; have, in many instances at least, received some instruction ; have seen some good examples ; and have been trained up in some good habits of industry and behaviour. All these benefits, however, very many of them have lost, under the influence of that delirious folly, which so frequently accompanies the unexpected acquisition of freedom ; and all of them must be much worse instructors, than those by whom they themselves were taught. The children, therefore, must, in all cases, be very imperfectly educated ; and, in most, will not be educated at all. In this manner the progeny of these people will naturally decline, until they have reached the lowest point of degradation both in ignorance and vice ; and will become blots and burdens upon society : not because they are weaker, or worse, by nature, than we are ; but because they are destitute of the advantages, which, under God, raise us above their miserable level.

When we introduced these unhappy people into this country, we charged ourselves with the whole care of their temporal and eternal interests ; and became responsible to God for the manner, in which we should perform this duty. It is in vain to alledge, that *our ancestors* brought them hither, and not we. As well might a son, who inherited an ample patrimony, refuse to pay a debt, because it was contracted by his father. We inherit our ample patrimony with all its incumbrances ; and are bound to pay the debts of our ancestors. *This* debt, particularly, we are bound to discharge : and, when the righteous Judge of the Universe comes to reckon with his servants,



he will rigidly exact the payment at our hands. To give them liberty, and stop here, is to entail upon them a curse. We are bound to give them, also, knowledge, industry, economy, good habits, moral and religious instruction, and all the means of eternal life. Did no commands of God, did no appeal to conscience and charity, require this at our hands ; our own interest, and that of our descendants, demands it all. The performance of this duty will make them blessings, the neglect of it will make them curses, to society.

With these views of the subject in hand, I feel myself constrained, in this public manner, to return my cordial thanks to the generous minded persons, who have instituted a school in this town for the female African children. I feel myself peculiarly obliged to return my thanks to the young ladies, who, with a dignified superiority to ordinary prejudices, have taken upon themselves the instruction of this school. I feel myself obliged, in the same cordial manner, to return my thanks to all the members of these Societies, for the noble example, which they have set before us, of doing good to the souls, and the bodies, of their suffering fellow-creatures. This is the sublime employment, for which rational beings were especially made ; a prelude to the beneficence of Heaven ; an anticipation of both the virtue, and the happiness, of immortal being. Here the female character assumes its fairest, highest, richest ornaments ; and is arrayed with a lustre, and loveliness, which leaves beauty, graceful manners, and fine accomplishments, out of sight, and out of remembrance.

*The Considerations, by which the duty of lending our cheerful assistance to works of charity at large, and to the charitable efforts of these Societies in particular, is urged upon us, might easily fill a volume.*

At the head of them all stands *the Command of the Eternal God*. All the *commands* of this great and glorious Being are *holy, just, and good*. Perhaps none of them wears the character of goodness, *i. e.* kindness, in a more eminent degree, than the command in question. The tender mercy of the Great Benefactor to the poor, the distressed, the widow, the fatherless, the sick, the ignorant, and the vicious, is here exhibited in a manner, worthy of its Author. These are the persons, who peculiarly need mercy. Their claims on those, who have it in their power to shew mercy, are here established by an authority, which cannot be called in question. These claims we cannot either refuse, or neglect, but at our peril. Our Saviour has declared, that *we shall always have the poor with us*. The command, therefore, is always obligatory. It is obligatory on *us*, equally with others; and by us it is to be obeyed in relieving, comforting, instructing, and reforming, these very persons. Our obedience, or disobedience, is daily watched by the all-seeing Eye of Him, whose voice gave the command; and who will require an account of the manner, in which we have regarded it, at the Final Day.

*The Example of the Divine Redeemer of mankind* is a consideration of exactly the same weight; and is plainly even more endeared, and more persuasive. It was a divine character of the Saviour that he went about doing good. It is a glorious characteristic of the miracles, wrought by this exalted person, that they were all acts of charity. There is not among them a single infliction of punishment, a single execution of justice, upon the gross and guilty wretches, by whom he was encircled, and from whom he received daily every effusion of slander, hatred, and persecution. But every day brought with it its train of benefactions. Every day saw this Divine Person healing the sick; restor-



ing the lame; cleansing the leper; dispossessing demons; feeding the hungry; giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead; enlightening the mind of ignorance; and conducting the vicious back to reformation and piety. The whole mission of the Messiah was one vast, one incomprehensible, combination of charity. The wants, the ignorance, the miseries, and the vice, of mankind drew the Son of God from heaven; led him to the stable; placed him in the manger; conducted him through toil, poverty, and persecution; nailed him to the cross; and buried him in the grave. My Brethren, "*Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ: walk as he also walked.*"

The views of this great Prophet of truth, this perfect Example of righteousness, concerning this subject, are every where expressed in the Gospel, in a vast variety of forms, with singular force, and with unrivalled beauty. Among them you have often read the fine parable of the *good Samaritan*. Which of you, while you were reading, was willing to become the heartless *Priest*, or the stupid *Levite*? Which of you felt, that himself could have come coldly up to the agonizing sufferer, and, surveying his miseries with a flinty eye, and a brutal bosom, could have *passed by on the other side*? Whose conscience did not thrill, whose heart did not glow, whose tears did not fall, with ingenuous sympathy, when the benevolent Stranger came up to the miserable sufferer; and, although hated by him and his whole nation with a singular enmity, refused the common civilities of life, and styled a dog, *pour into his wounds the oil and the wine*, which he had brought for his own sustenance, place him on his beast, convey him to the inn, and there at his own expence provide effectually for his cure? My Brethren, you are daily passing by the children of distress. They are not

Jews : they are not enemies. They are your fellow-citizens, your friends, your kindred. While, therefore, you read the delightful story of *the Samaritan* ; while your consciences approve, and your tongues commend, his charming, Evangelical example, "*Go, and do likewise.*"

*The supreme excellence of this Christ-like character is another consideration, which cannot fail to have the happiest influence on all, who have tasted the sweets of doing good. "I have coveted," says the great Apostle of the Gentiles, "no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and unto them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that, so labouring, ye ought to support the weak ; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive."*

View this great, this wonderful man, leaving his country ; his friends ; his certain prospects of opulence ; the supreme distinction, to which his vast powers of mind gave him an undisputed title ; and all the pleasures, and hopes, coveted by man. Behold him wandering over land and sea ; encountering hunger and thirst, cold and heat, pain and sorrow, contempt and persecution, torture and death ; to rescue the souls of his fellow-men from ignorance, vice, and perdition ; and to restore them to the knowledge of God, faith in the Redeemer, holiness of life, and a blessed immortality. See this same man, amid all these trials, amid all this beneficence, labouring daily with his hands, that he might minister to his own necessities, and those of his companions ; supplying the wants of himself and others, instead of receiving that support from his converts, to which his claims allowed of no question. Whence arose this singular con-



duct of this astonishing man? It arose, my Brethren, from the fact, that he believed, that he embraced, that he realized, that glorious declaration of Christ, "*It is more blessed to give, than to receive.*"

In this world the order of the Universe is inverted. All enjoyment is here sought by the natural disposition of man, not in *giving*; not in communicating good to others; but in *receiving*; in gaining good from others. Happiness is here sought in heaping up wealth; in acquiring power, influence, and distinction; in the attainment of luxury, and shew. It is sought, my Brethren, but is never found. "*Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.*" In plainer language, Israel is destitute of happiness, because he seeks it in the gratification of a selfish spirit.

The order of things, established by God, is directly the reverse of this. In the virtuous universe happiness is found *in doing good*; not *in gaining it*. Thus God finds his own happiness in infinite beneficence to his creatures. Thus Christ found his happiness in saving a ruined world. Thus the Apostles found their happiness in promoting the conversion of mankind. Thus parents find their happiness in doing good to their children; friends in increasing the comfort of their friends; and every Evangelical benefactor, every truly charitable man, in relieving distress, and restoring comfort to the sufferer. My Brethren, *I have shewed you all these things, how that, so labouring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give, than to receive."* This is happiness unembittered, refined, noble, approved by God, and destined to endure and increase forever.

In the same manner the circumstances of those, who are to be relieved, appeal with powerful eloquence to

the heart of sympathy and kindness. Think, my Brethren, what it is ; think what it must be felt to have been by the heart of an Evangelical benefactor ; to warm the frozen hearth of poverty ; to deal out bread to the hungry sufferer ; to cover the naked ; to cherish the frame, shivering with cold ; to make soft the bed of sickness ; to pillow the languishing head of pain ; and to pour wine and oil into the wounds of misery. Think what it is to enlighten the cloudy soul of ignorance ; to purify the corrupted heart of vice and pollution ; to call back the outcast, the prodigal, the profligate, to the house of his Heavenly Father : to prevent a multitude of children from becoming outcasts, prodigals, and profligates ; to teach those, who otherwise would never be taught, to read the Word of God ; to understand, and unite in, his worship ; to learn the way of life ; and to find the path to Heaven.

There are men, who, unhappily, will not be moved by these considerations ; generous, noble, and divine, as they are. Let me remind every man of this character, that God hath said ; "*Blessed is he that considereth the poor. JEHOVAH will deliver him in the time of trouble : JEHOVAH will preserve him, and keep him alive ; and he shall be blessed upon the earth. JEHOVAH will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing ; and will make all his bed in his sickness ; and will not deliver him into the hand of his enemies.*" God hath said, "*He, that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to JEHOVAH ; and that, which he hath given, HE will pay to him again.*" This is a consideration, which even the miser, if he will think, cannot fail to feel. The most selfish man living, if he has any sobriety of thought, is obliged, at times, to realize, that he stands in absolute need of the blessing of God ; of his protection, of his bounty, of his mercy. Every man's own interest, therefore,



and infinitely his best interest, is inseparably interwoven with the performance of this duty. Equally united with it is the interest of his children. The true secret of providing blessings for our offspring was discovered, and declared, by the Psalmist : a secret, which all the sagacity of Avarice has never been able to discern. *"I have been young"* said the man after God's own heart, *"and now am old : yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth ; and his seed is blessed."*

Let me also remind that stony heart of Insensibility, those greedy feelings of Avarice, which know no wants, or sufferings, but their own, that *He shall have judgment without mercy, who shewed no mercy.*

In the great day of account, *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him ; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set his sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat ; thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me."* Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, *"Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ?"* And the King shall answer and say unto them, *"Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."*

Then shall he say, also, unto them on the left hand,  
 "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared  
 for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and  
 ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no  
 drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked,  
 and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited  
 me not." Then shall they also answer him, saying, "Lord,  
 when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger,  
 or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto  
 thee?" Then shall he answer them, saying, "Verily, I say  
 unto you, In as much as ye did it not unto one of the least  
 of these, ye did it not unto me."

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment;  
 but the righteous into life eternal.



